

UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES

COMMITTEE

(Mr ASHLEY asked and was given permission to extend his remarks at this point in the Record.)

Mr ASHLEY Mr Speaker, I am constrained to vote against this resolution providing for additional funds for operation of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. I do so not because I question the purposes for which the committee was established, but because I am drawn to the conclusion that it frequently has exceeded its proper scope of authority, thereby trespassing upon fundamental rights of individual citizens, and because I believe the committee's legitimate business requires no additional funds at this time.

All of us are keenly aware that the forces of communism are unswervingly dedicated to the destruction of this and other free nations. In the 2 years I spent with Radio Free Europe, I gained a firsthand knowledge of the tactics used to subvert Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and other central European countries. Nothing could be more clear than our responsibility to be vigilant and to expose the Communist conspiracy which openly is pledged to our downfall.

But surely we are aware, too, that communism is not the only threat to our liberty. The individual freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights can be lost or diluted through our own action or inaction, and if this is allowed to happen by our own hand, the loss of liberty is no less than if imposed by an alien adversary.

Are we as ready and willing to defend our individual freedoms in the House of Representatives as we are on the battlefield? I believe that is the issue, Mr Speaker.

Fear of taking action which may be misinterpreted as a lack of courage is no reason for action. The House of Representatives is the guardian of Government and the basic freedoms set forth in the Bill of Rights. It is an integral part of our Constitution. If these freedoms are to be preserved, it is our duty to continue to have the courage to do something to curb abuses of Government power wherever they are found to exist. To fail in this responsibility is to invite the same unbridled excesses of the McCarthy period which still lie heavily upon the conscience of Congress and our country.

CPYRGHT